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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; IRAN; CHINA; ARGENTINE PARIS CLUB DEBT;  
10/18/07

## 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international stories include President Bush's warning that if Iran obtained nuclear weapons it could lead to "World War III;" the outcome of the 17th Communist Party Congress; and Argentina's ongoing negotiations to repay its Paris Club debt.

## 2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

### - "Threats"

Claudio Mario Aliscioni, international columnist of leading "Clarn," opines (10/18) "On the eve of the invasion to Iraq, the Saudi Ambassador to the UN gave an apocalyptic address that, in view of what happened thereafter, sounds prophetic now - 'We are on the verge of an overwhelming disaster. Whatever the reasons are for it, I must say that the outcome will be catastrophic at all levels - human, economic, political, legal, and ethical.' It is not difficult to agree with that prediction now and also to relate it to current threats to Iran.

"The entire Iraq campaign revealed itself as a business affair and Washington's ambition to expand its power over a vital region in the world.

"Bush's turn to Tehran can be explained by the failure of the campaign in Iraq. The disturbing thing is that, due to the president's weakness, no one can completely dismiss the fear of a new blow that will plunge the world into another disaster."

### - "China's new agenda"

An editorial in daily-of-record "La Nacisn" (10/18) reads "With the promise of allowing bigger participation from citizens in the political process to be developed until 2020 and quadrupling per capita income vis-à-vis that of 2000, Chinese President Hu Jintao laid the groundwork for what he called 'a moderately accommodated society.'

"These were his main remarks at the Chinese Communist Party Congress, which is held every five years to define expectations for the next five-year period and to welcome a roster of younger officials who could succeed the current leader when he finishes his term in office in five years...

"... Hu also insisted on the need to promote domestic consumption as a way of lowering the huge trade surplus that has accumulated, thereby destabilizing other economic powers... This could help to orderly and slowly appreciate the Yuan... and, in this way, Chinese companies will not depend on bank funding as they do now.

"Without renouncing Communism, Chinese citizens, in Hu's view, will gradually enjoy 'broader democratic rights.' It will not be a conversion toward a Western-style democracy, which has always been rejected by Communist leaders but a gradual opening under the party's supervision. The proposal implies the organization of public debates of draft bills...

"Another important decision unveiled by Hu is improving governmental bureaucracy and monitoring the government officials' behavior due to rampant corruption...

"The call to Taiwan to reach a negotiated peace accord aimed at obtaining a peaceful and agreed upon reunification was surprising...

"On military matters, Hu announced the continuity of the current overhauling of Armed Forces... However, he did not announce an increase in their number, which could have raised alarm bells in other powers.

"It was also remarkable that Hu acknowledged the need for the protection and preservation of natural resources given that China is one of the most polluting countries... We welcome this remark as well as the signs of openness and participation that will grant greater freedoms to the citizens of the country having the largest population in the world."

- "The US says that Argentina should reach a deal with the IMF"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacisn," comments (10/18) "Still far from the US Department of State's most conciliatory view, the US Treasury Department said yesterday that Argentina will have to agree on an IMF 'program' if it wants to restructure its pending debt to the Paris Club.

"However, the Treasury Department also made a first wink to Argentina by stressing that it wishes 'to facilitate' negotiations so that the country can repay its debt 'as soon as possible, according to a Treasury spokesperson.

"During the meeting between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and FM Taiana in late September, Secretary Rice lightened the requirements for a deal although she pointed out that this will depend on the 'understanding' Argentina can reach with the IMF.

"... The crucial point will be the kind of 'understanding' the Argentine Government can reach with new IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn, which could well take the form of an 'extended' report on Section IV rather than a 'formal program.' This was the core of the message Rice conveyed to Taiana, which Shannon reiterated in response to a question from 'La Nacisn' in September. He said: 'A positive response from the Paris Club will depend on the ability of Argentina and the IMF to reach some kind of understanding.'"

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